



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5

77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD

CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

OCT 23 2012

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

E-19J

Jane Darnell
United States Department of Agriculture – Forest Service
Medford-Park Falls Ranger District
Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest
850 North 8th Street
Medford, Wisconsin 54451

**RE: Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for Park Falls
Hardwoods project (Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest); Price County, Wisconsin
(CEQ# 20120306)**

Dear Ms. Darnell:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service's (USDA-Forest Service) Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) and signed Record of Decision (ROD) for proposed vegetation and transportation management activities (collectively referred to as the Park Falls Hardwoods Project). The Park Falls Hardwoods Project is located on National Forest System land in the southeastern portion of the Park Falls Unit of the Medford-Park Falls Ranger District, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, located approximately 13-15 miles northeast of Phillips, Wisconsin.

The Draft EIS analyzed four potential action alternatives to implement the existing 2004 Forest Plan and move forest resources towards the desired future conditions for the Management Area (MA-2B) located in the area of analysis. A no-action alternative was also studied. The Draft EIS identified Alternative 5 as USDA-Forest Service's preferred alternative. The Final EIS also identified Alternative 5 as the preferred alternative with two minor modifications. Specifically, modifications made to Alternative 5 were revisions to two roads identified to continue to be closed to motorized access. These modifications did not result in substantive changes to the preferred alternative.

In our August 17, 2012, comment letter, EPA rated the Draft EIS's preferred alternative as **Lack of Objections – LO**. Based on our review of the Final EIS, we maintain our lack of objections.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the Final EIS. Please keep EPA apprised of the status of any requests for administrative review (appeal) that may be filed on the ROD during the appeal period. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Ms. Liz Pelloso, PWS, of my staff at 312-886-7425 or via email at pelloso.elizabeth@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



for Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief
NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

cc: Jim McDonald, USDA Forest Service